

An Inside Look in the Career Fair

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AIChE Fills the Swalm Auditorium for a Chevron Info Session

The end of September is rapidly approaching. Fall weather is slowly settling in, and students are slowly learning how to be a student again after a long, summer break. However, the end of September heralds another tradition that Mississippi State has been doing for over twenty years. Mississippi State's brightest students don their best business professional attire, and all converge at the Humphrey's Coliseum. Inside, over 100 companies position themselves in booths circling the Coliseum. Nervous students line up, with resumes in hand, and are greeted by the faculty of the Career Center. Students are given a name tag, and a map showing each specific

company and their respective location in the Coliseum. Finally, the Career Center gives each student a mint, and a motivational word before the students clamor into the crowd. This scene repeats itself year after year; however, no one gets chance to hear the thoughts of the faculty who meticulously ensures that this event runs without a hitch. We interview Megan Artz, a Senior Coordinator of the Cooperative Educational Program, and Jason Keith, the dean of Engineering to get their take on career fair, and how students should prepare.

Many of the students who attend the career fair never think about the execution and dedication that running a career fair of this caliber requires. "Right around May when the Spring Semester ends, we're already planning for our next career fair," explains Megan Artz, a Senior Coordinator of the Cooperative Education Program. In fact, the bulk of the planning occurs during June and July. Artz, along with the other Co-Op Center faculty hold a meeting promptly during the first month of the summer to discuss and brainstorm in ways the career fair can be optimized and improved. Then, after the planning, the faculty executes their plan. Not only do they ensure that the usual companies who attend the Career fair are registered, but the faculty also reaches out to other companies who may not frequently our career fair. Artz also expressed her passion for ensuring that the experiences that the students gain at the career fair are the best that they can be. "It gives me joy to see our career fair running smoothly. I love to see our talented students excel themselves professionally. The career fair is a way for students to get a face to face connection with a company that they're interested in. This gives students to opportunity to see if they fit within the company's culture and vision". As a student of Mississippi State, I am grateful for the strong dedication that the faculty of our Co-Op Center has. Even if it means missing parts of their summer, they are

committed in seeing students cultivate their growing professional experience so that they can thrive after college and excel at the workplace.

Jason Keith, the Dean of Engineering, issues same commitment as Mrs. Artz. He stresses the importance of student participation and involvement in our growing and bustling career fair. He, as well as Ms. Artz, view the career fair as a way for students to practice speaking with professionals who are actively involved in the industry. “The more you get to talk about your experiences as a student with someone who may want to potentially hire you, the better off you are.” Not only are the students reaping rewards from the career fair, but employers do as well. “We try tell our students’ stories to show prospective companies the high-quality students that we have, and it’s worked. Our career fair has been sold out for the last four years,” he explains. Companies themselves are rapidly signing up to participate in the career fair because they can see that Mississippi’s State rigorous program consistently produces outstanding students who have a strong academic background. In fact, the number of companies have grown so much that the Engineering career fair, which is only normally one day, will now be hosted for both days of this year’s career fair. This is a strong indicator of the value that Mississippi State students possess.

The career fair will be held on September 25th and 26th of this year. If you are a student who is planning to attend the career fair, here are a few tips from Dr. Keith and Mrs. Artz. Regardless of a student’s classification, going to the career fair has many benefits, as Dr. Keith states, “handing out resumes, getting feedback can all have a great impact on a student’s professional development.” These experiences that the career fair offers will eventually help students attain full-time offers in future. Also, be sure to research the companies in which you are interested. Research what the company creates, their workplace culture, and their mission, so that when you approach the company on Career Fair, you are poised to ask

meaningful questions to your potential employers. “Students who are prepared, and who are willing to ask questions and learn more, those [students] will get the opportunity to take on a Co-op or Internship position.” Finally, according to Mrs. Artz, one of the most important tips for students to follow is to have “someone proof-read [their] resume.” Your resume is your gateway into the position that you want at any company. Be sure that your resume is polished and that it actively portrays your skill set and experiences. Also, the Co-op Office will review your resume for free. Just drop off your resume at the Co-op Office on the 3rd floor of McCain, and they will contact you when they’re finished!

Go to Career Fair! Not only do you have the possibility to acquire a Co-Op or Internship position, but the experiences and practice that you will receive at the Career Fair will increase your professional skills, which in turn will help you receive a full-time offer!